United Nations

Press Release

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council meets to discuss reports that International Atomic Energy Agency team has been denied access by Iraqi military authorities to nuclear site in Iraq designated for inspection.

- Kuwait denies allegations of "unfair" treatment of Palestinians.

- Secretary-General welcomes communiqué on Cambodian cease-fire adopted in Paris by parties to conflict.

- International Labour Conference concludes in Geneva, adopting new international convention to protect workers in hotels and restaurants.

- Secretary-General to travel to Germany and Liechtenstein on official visit, to address summer session of Economic and Social Council in Geneva.

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Security Council members this evening urged Iraq to fulfil its obligation under Council resolution 687 (1991) to cooperate with a United Nations team empowered to carry out inspections aimed at disposing of Iraq's chemical, biological and nuclear weapons capacity.

The inspections are being carried out by a joint team consisting of representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and a Special Commission established under the resolution.

The Council had before it a letter from the Secretary-General containing letters from the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission and the Director-General of the IAEA, in which they report on Iraq's non-cooperation with an inspection team.

According to the letters, Iraqi authorities denied access to a site in the Abu Gharaib Army Barracks in Baghdad for three days, allowing access only on 26 June. When the team arrived on 23 June, it had observed "in areas to which access was denied, considerable activity ... involving cranes, trucks, forklifts, other equipment and work crews". When access was finally granted,

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"the activities which had been observed from a distance during the first visit had ceased and objects that had been seen had been removed".

Statements were made by the representatives of the United States, France, Belgium, Austria, the United Kingdom, Ecuador, Romania and Iraq.

The representative of the United States said the episode demonstrated that Iraq had been doing everything to conceal the full extent of its unsafeguarded nuclear enrichment programme which the United States believed was directed towards the development of nuclear weapons.

The representative of Iraq denied the allegations, saying that it was fully cooperating in the implementation of resolution 687. Access to the site in question had been denied for only one day, which was a religious holy day. Further, as that site was under the jurisdiction of the military rather than the Ministry of Industry, additional clearances had been required before the inspection team could be admitted.

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Kuwait has denied recent allegations by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) that it is treating Palestinians in Kuwait unfairly.

In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 24 June, Kuwaiti Ambassador Mohammad Abulhasan said the tribunals it was conducting were in accordance with national and international law, in the presence of local and foreign media. The sentences handed down, he said, were appropriate for the acts committed. Despite the impartiality of the verdicts, the Government had set up a commission to review the sentences to make sure that they fit the charges before referring them to the court martial for approval. Mr. Abulhasan dismissed the allegations as "a propaganda campaign mounted by the offices of the Palestine Liberation Organization".

Last week, the Permanent Observer for Palestine at the United Nations, Nasser Al-Kidwa, in a letter to the Secretary-General called the tribunals for alleged collaborators a "sham", and appealed to the Secretary-General to intervene to stop the Kuwaiti Government from carrying out handed-down death sentences.

In a related development, the Secretary-General's spokeswoman announced today that the Emir of Kuwait had commuted the death sentences to life imprisonment for individuals found guilty of collaborating with Iraq during the Gulf war. The Spokeswoman said the decision came today after contacts between the Secretary-General and the Government of Kuwait and covered all death sentences.

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The Spokesman for the Secretary-General said today that Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar had welcomed the final communiqué adopted at the two-day meeting of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia which concluded today in Pattaya, Thailand, under the chairmanship of Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

The Secretary-General was particularly gratified by the decision of the members of the National Council to implement an unlimited cease-fire and by their commitment to stop receiving foreign military assistance.

He expressed hope that the Council would continue to work vigorously towards national reconciliation, so as to create a climate conducive to an early completion of the negotiating process and to the adoption of a comprehensive political settlement in the framework of the Paris Conference on Cambodia.

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New international labour standards for workers in hotels and restaurants has been adopted at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) three-week annual session which ended in Geneva today.

A United Nations press officer reporting from Geneva said the new international standards covered topics such as reasonable working hours, minimum daily and weekly rest periods, and adequate compensation for work carried out during holidays. Protection of workers claims in case of insolvency of their employers was another major subject, on which new standards would be adopted next year.

During the session, discussion focused on finding common international grounds for social justice in a world undergoing profound political, economic and social change. Participants stressed the importance of joint government-employer-worker action in improving the employment levels and conditions of work of millions of people in rural areas and in the informal sector.

About 2,000 government, employer and worker delegates from 141 member countries of the ILO took part in this year's discussions.

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The Secretary-General will travel to Europe this weekend to pay official visits to Germany and Liechtenstein and to attend the opening of the Economic and Social Council session in Geneva.

During his visit to Germany, which takes place from 30 June to 2 July, the Secretary-General will conduct talks with the President, the Federal Chancellor and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, among others.

From the evening of 2 July until 4 July, the Secretary-General will be in Geneva in connection with the opening of the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council, which he will address Wednesday morning. On

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Thursday, 4 July, he will open a special ministerial meeting on "The Impact of the Recent Evolution of East-West Relations on the Course of the World Economy, in particular on the Economic Growth and Development on the Developing Countries, as well as on International Economic Cooperation".

From 4 to 6 July, the Secretary-General will pay an official visit to Liechtenstein at the invitation of the Government. He is scheduled to meet with Hans Brunhart, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

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